sheer will to educate young children may turn out to be a silencing of their sensitivity to the animal question.

An important focus of the book is also the problem of critical thinking. Although critical thinking has become a buzzword today, or perhaps because of it, its nature is difficult to define. In fact, the reference to the need for critical thinking itself seems to have become uncritical. Therefore, it seems appropriate to examine this central concept of contemporary education. After examining some definitions, Ćurko and Guć finally refer to Dewey's remark that thinking should focus on the assumptions and consequences of our beliefs. But perhaps most importantly, in an educational setting, critical thinking must be distinguished from manipulation and mere memorization. Again, the authors show that children's attitudes toward animals can be seen as an excellent starting point for critical thinking, as their questions often expose unwarranted adult beliefs and values. But again, to recognize this as a starting point for education, teachers themselves must be open to discussion and willing to learn.

A part of the book is also dedicated to the analysis of the curricular results of the subject "Nature and Society" for Croatian elementary schools. As the authors show, the curriculum provides a good starting point for critical reflection of our moral attitudes towards nature and animals, if the teaching is carried out with quality. This is not to say, of course, that other subjects should not be involved in addressing the animal question. The arts are certainly one way to foster bioethical sensitivity. Moreover, it seems important to foster not only critical but also caring thinking when addressing animal issues in education.

The short book, whose importance far exceeds its length, ends with some practical examples of activities for children related to questions of animal ethics. These range from workshops on the protection of the Croatian sea (titled "Ecotopy") to the protection of animals, and the question of how far we should extend our moral responsibility (to all animals, including insects, or only to certain animals?). The workshop titled "Making Story" ("Stvaranje priče"), which requires dedication, individual exploration, autonomous creativity, critical thinking and openness, also addressed numerous issues, mostly related to pollution and the endangerment of animals. However, readers should not expect Ćurko and Guć to offer recipes for education in animal ethics and bioethical sensitivity. In fact, as readers will hopefully understand from what has been written about this small but influential book, this would be contrary to its main message and goal of education. On the contrary, in the true spirit of educational philosophy, or rather philosophical education, the authors prefer to pose problems rather than solve them, admitting that children may ultimately be better at this than adults. So the question of how to talk to children about animal abuse seems to have a fairly straightforward and simple – albeit demanding – answer: start listening to them when they talk about it! The book is not only a welcome contribution to the philosophy of education, philosophy for children, and education for environmental and animal ethics, but also a necessary beacon in these days of dark ecology.

Tomaž Grušovnik

Katherine Withy

Heidegger on Being Affected

Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2024

Katherine Withy's Heidegger on Being Affected (2024) offers a clear and insightful account of Martin Heidegger's philosophy of affectivity, emphasizing how *Befindlichkeit* ("Disposedness", finding) and *Stimmung* (attunement) shape our existence as beings entangled with the world. By rooting Heidegger's ideas in Aristotle's concept of *pathē* and connecting them to other fields like psychology, psychiatry, and artificial intelligence, Withy reveals the enduring importance and relevance of Heidegger's thought. The book argues that affectivity, our capacity to be moved by entities, grounds our understanding of Being, from everyday experiences to existential moments and experiences like angst and boredom.

The book is structured in four chapters: (1) "Introduction" (pp. 2–7), (2) "Befindlichkeit" (pp. 7–23), (3) "Stimmungen" (pp. 23–46), and (4) "Uptake" (pp. 46–54).

Withy adeptly navigates Heidegger's notoriously dense lexicon; she starts the book by rejecting the misleading conceptualization and translation of *Befindlichkeit* as "intentionality", "Disposedness" or "state-of-mind", opting for "finding", to emphasize our situatedness and vulnerability to being affected. This choice underscores Heidegger's departure from Cartesian subjectivity, framing

affectivity as a mode of being-in-the-world rather than an inner psychological state. Her analysis of *Stimmung* as "attunement" (rather than "mood") highlights its "atmospheric", ecological, world-disclosing nature (p. 5), aligning with Heidegger's view that moods are not private but shared (e.g., *Zeitgeist*).

The "Introduction" (pp. 2–7) lays out Heidegger's account of affectivity as central to his philosophy. Withy explains *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmung* as concepts that show how we are always affected by the world around us. Using examples like waiting for a bus in the rain (p. 8), Withy connects these ideas to everyday life, showing how entities matter through our practical involvement with them. Withy contrasts this with Cartesian views of emotions as internal states, emphasizing that, for Heidegger, affectivity is not about private feelings. Similarly, *Stimmung* is presented as the way moods or attunements, like anxiety or joy, which shape how the world appears meaningful. A shared mood, such as the collective excitement at a public event, illustrates how attunements are not just individual, but can define a community's experience.

The chapter also ties Heidegger's thought to Aristotle's *pathē* and signals the book's aim to bridge philosophy with fields like psychopathology, psychiatry, and psychology. Withy explains that Heidegger reworks Aristotle's notion of being "helped or hurt" by external things into an ontological framework, where affectivity is not merely psychological but a fundamental aspect of existence. She briefly notes influences from Augustine's restlessness and Kierkegaard's angst, showing how Heidegger builds on these ideas to argue that being affected reveals our vulnerability to the world's demands. This historical grounding helps readers see Heidegger's philosophy as emerging from a broader and longer tradition, and not just an isolated system. She also hints at the social and political implications of shared attunements, such as cultural moods that shape historical moments. The introduction sets a clear foundation for the arguments that follow.

The second chapter titled "Befindlichkeit" (pp. 7–23), further explains why *Befindlichkeit* should be translated as "finding". For Withy, "finding" captures more closely the way we are thrown (*Geworfen*) into a world where we encounter and establish relations with entities; like a broken hammer frustrating a carpenter (p. 13). This example shows *Befindlichkeit* as our openness to entities that enable or disrupt our goals, emphasizing our practical engagement over subjective feelings. This analysis clearly sets Withy's work in the, so-called, American or Pragmatic traditions of Heidegger studies, with authors such as Dreyfus, Guignon, and Gallagher. Withy further ties *Befindlichkeit* to thrownness, highlighting our vulnerability to entities, like a late bus threatening our plans, that solicit action based on their significance. The strength of the chapter is its ability to bridge Heidegger's ontology and phenomenology with concrete experience. Withy avoids jargon-heavy explanations by grounding *Befindlichkeit* in everyday scenarios. These examples show how affectivity is not an occasional feeling but a constant feature of existence, shaping how we navigate the world.

Withy's treatment of *Befindlichkeit* aligns well with Heidegger's view that it precedes cognition and reaction, serving as the foundation for how we encounter the world. *Befindlichkeit* embodies our thrownness (*Geworfenheit*), where we are thrust into existence without prior knowledge, always in a specific disposition shaped by *Stimmungen* (moods or attunements). These attunements, like anxiety or boredom, are not merely psychological but tied to our embodiment, as Heidegger's reading of Aristotle's *pathē* suggests. For instance, *pathos* emerges from our bodily existence, not just external events, making our physicality central to being affected. This resonates with Withy's bus stop example, where rain solicits action through bodily discomfort, not just mental frustration.

Befindlichkeit also reveals the ecological nature of existence, as *Dasein* is interwoven with other entities, tools, people, or environments, defining its essence through these relations. This openness, however, carries a closure; our origins and ultimate possibilities, our authentic self, remain obscured, as seen in Heidegger's notion of being-toward-death. Withy's focus on practical engagement could be extended by considering how *Befindlichkeit* shapes authenticity, also possibly through the lens of Hannah Arendt since she assigns a part of her analysis to the social aspect of Heidegger's concepts. Arendt links *Befindlichkeit* to *eudaimonia* (well-being), suggesting that our "immutable identity" emerges in action and is fully revealed only in the "story" left after death, akin to Heidegger's *Geschichte* (life-story). This ties *Befindlichkeit* to a public, ecological self, where authenticity arises in *Mit-Dasein* (being-with-others), and not in a solitary reflection (cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1998, p. 96, 193).

It seems that Withy also links affectivity with effectivity, showing how *Dasein*'s Being both shapes and is shaped by its worldliness and the entities within it. We can position Heidegger as a precursor to 4E philosophy and ecological theories of mind, such as J. J. Gibson's ecological action-perception

theory of effectivities and affordances (James J. Gibson, *Ecological approach to visual perception*, Taylor & Francis, New York 2014). Withy emphasizes that *Dasein's* relationship to the world is not a subject-object dichotomy, despite discussions of entities being disclosed to *Dasein*. She clarifies Heidegger's distinction that the subject-object split pertains to the modes of ready-to-hand and present-at-hand, preserving his original intent to transcend traditional metaphysical frameworks.

The third chapter, titled "Stimmungen" (pp. 23–46), examines Heidegger's concept of attunement, as the ontic manifestations of affectivity that disclose the world's significance. This chapter builds on the book's earlier discussion of *Befindlichkeit* to show how attunements shape our experience of entities and reveal existential structures. Withy opens the chapter by clarifying why she prefers "attunement" over "mood" for *Stimmung*. She argues that "mood" suggests a subjective, fleeting feeling, whereas "attunement" captures the way *Stimmungen* structure our entire encounter with the world, like a "melody" (p. 5), setting the tone for a piece of music. For example, she describes how a shared excitement at a concert or a collective grief during a public tragedy reveals a communal *Zeitgeist*, showing that attunements are not individual but shape how groups experience meaning (p. 19). This emphasis on shared attunements distinguishes Heidegger's view from psychological accounts, aligning *Stimmungen* with our being-in-the-world, as introduced in the book's discussion of *Befindlichkeit* (p. 24).

The chapter's core argument is that *Stimmungen* are the ontic expressions of *Befindlichkeit*'s ontological openness. While *Befindlichkeit* describes our general vulnerability to being affected by entities, *Stimmungen* are specific ways in which this manifests, through attunements like angst, fear, joy, or boredom. Withy uses examples to illustrate this: a person feeling fear when a dog barks nearby is not just reacting internally but is attuned to the world in a way that highlights danger; "in that out of it something like the fearsome may come close" (p. 17). The barking dog in the night solicits a response (e.g., running or freezing) because it matters within the person's practical context (p. 27). This connection to *Befindlichkeit* shows how attunements make entities significant, tying abstract ontology to everyday experience.

Withy's analysis of *Grundstimmungen*, fundamental attunements like angst and boredom, is the book's most innovative analysis. She argues that these attunements go beyond ordinary moods to reveal deeper existential truths. Drawing on Heidegger's *Being and Time*, she explains angst as an *ontopathos* (p. 41), a being-affected by "nothingness" that underlies existence. Unlike fear, which targets a specific threat, angst arises when everyday routines break down, confronting us with our thrownness and finitude. For instance, Withy describes a moment of existential unease where everything becomes equally meaningless, showing how angst disrupts our absorption in daily tasks and points to the "burden" of being. This makes angst a methodological tool for Heidegger, allowing phenomenological access to the structures of care (*Sorge*) and authenticity (p. 42).

Similarly, Withy's treatment of boredom, based on Heidegger's *1929–30 Lectures*, is innovative. She distinguishes three levels of boredom, from fleeting ennui (e.g., waiting for a delayed train) to "profound boredom", where time itself feels oppressive (p. 40). This profound boredom, which she calls a *chronopathos*, reveals our temporality; our existence as finite beings stretched across past, present, and future. Withy illustrates this with an example of someone stuck in a monotonous routine, where nothing solicits action, exposing the weight of time. By framing boredom as a disclosure of *Dasein's* finitude, she shows how it, like angst, calls us toward authentic resolve, a theme Heidegger develops in his existential analytic of *Dasein*.

The chapter also connects *Stimmungen* to historical and cultural contexts, drawing on Heidegger's later work. Withy discusses how *Grundstimmungen* like wonder (*Erstaunen*) in ancient Greece or shock (*Erschrecken*) in modernity shape philosophical epochs by disclosing different understandings of being (p. 39). For example, she references Heidegger's reading of Hölderlin's poetry, where a shared attunement like "holy mourning" defines a community's historical world (p. 40). This analysis shows how attunements are not just personal but can transform collective experience, a point that resonates with the book's later discussion of interdisciplinary applications. In this chapter, it becomes obvious that Withy's strength lies in her ability to make Heidegger's ideas accessible, grounding them in everyday experiences, showing how attunements shape our daily lives.

The final chapter, titled "Uptake" (pp. 46–54) proposes an interdisciplinary application for Heidegger's ideas. Withy shows how *Befindlichkeit* and *Stimmungen* inform psychopathology, psychology and psychiatry, particularly in understanding affective disorders like depression, where entities lose their ability to solicit action. For example, she cites a patient's description of depression as "nothing in me was touched" (p. 54) to illustrate a breakdown in world-disclosure. She also critiques the contemporary understanding of

artificial intelligence, arguing that AI lacks *Befindlichkeit* and thus cannot care about entities the way humans do. Additionally, Withy explores communal attunements, like those in Hölderlin's poetry, to show how shared moods shape cultural and historical worlds. This chapter underscores the broad relevance of Heidegger's thought (pp. 51–54).

In psychopathology, *Befindlichkeit* offers a framework for understanding disorders, like the already mentioned depression, as ruptures in world-disclosure. When entities no longer solicit action, as Withy notes, the world becomes *unheimlich* (uncanny), reflecting a breakdown in care, *Sorge*. This aligns with enactivist theories, where cognition is embodied sense-making, and depression manifests as a loss of affordances, where the body feels like a burden rather than a medium of engagement. Withy's analysis could further incorporate how conflicting temporalities, such as trauma's oscillation between past and future, disrupt *Befindlichkeit*'s unified temporality, offering a nuanced view of existential paralysis beyond inauthenticity. Withy's distinction between affording and soliciting clarifies how entities matter, and her hints at psychological applications set the stage for later chapters. For phenomenologists, the chapter offers a precise reading of Befindlichkeit as foundational to *Being and Time*. For psychologists, it suggests how affectivity underpins mental health, while social philosophers may find its ecological implications compelling. By integrating embodiment, pathos, and authenticity, this commentary extends Withy's analysis, showing *Befindlichkeit* as a bridge between ontology and lived experience.

To conclude, Withy's book stands out for several reasons. First, her careful handling and translation of Heidegger's terminology makes his concepts accessible and clear without oversimplifying them. As said in the introduction, by translating *Befindlichkeit* as "finding" and *Stimmung* as "attunement", she captures their ontological weight and avoids psychological misreading. Her use of examples, like a broken tool or a shared cultural mood, grounds these ideas in concrete scenarios. Secondly, the book places Heidegger's phenomenology and ontology in a historical context by tracing his ideas to Aristotle's *pathē* and, to a lesser extent, Augustine and Kierkegaard. This shows that Heidegger's philosophy builds on tradition, not just breaks from it, making his work more approachable for readers unfamiliar with his destructive and deconstructive approach to ontology. Similarly, Withy's interdisciplinary approach is a major strength. By applying Heidegger's ideas to psychology, psychiatry, and AI, she demonstrates their practical value. Her analysis of communal attunements also opens up questions about how shared moods shape social and political realities. Finally, her focus on *Grundstimmungen* like angst and boredom provides a clear entry point into Heidegger's later work, particularly his shift toward historical and poetic attunements. Her argument that these attunements reveal temporality and nothingness adds depth to Heidegger's phenomenological method.

In summary, her book is a clear and thorough account of Heidegger's concepts, showing how our openness to the world shapes existence. Withy's examples, historical connections, and conceptual precision make it a great contribution, enriched by perspectives on embodiment and authenticity that highlight its relevance across disciplines. Overall, it is a valuable contribution to Heidegger scholarship, offering a focused study of his account of affectivity. It serves as both an introduction for those new to Heidegger and a detailed resource for advanced scholars.

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